IWMI International Water Management Institute

DISCUSSION BRIEF

Community dialogues to build resilience: Ghana's policy context

PHOTO: NATHAN RUSSELL/IWMI.

A review of national policies

The *Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda* (GSGDA) (2010-2013) called for accelerated agricultural modernization, sustainable natural resource management and improvement of urban infrastructure to build resilience to climate change. GSGDA II (2014-2017) promotes the development of climate-resilient crop varieties and a move to a green economy. It also aims to improve the resilience of coastal settlements, riverbanks and floodplains to natural disasters, particularly flooding.

Key messages

- A project by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is piloting a protocol to support the sustainable management of water, land and ecosystems as a pathway to climate resilience and better livelihoods.
- To set the context, the project includes a review of national policies on agriculture and natural resource management, and strategies for the local management of watersheds.
- Development of the agriculture sector in Ghana has been a government priority for the past decade. Agricultural policy in the country has gradually shifted from an explicit focus on modernization to tackling the challenges of the rural poor, including climate change and variability. More recently, the recognition that climate change threatens the productivity and sustainability of agricultural growth has led the government to include resilience building and vulnerability reduction strategies in national policies and laws governing multiple sectors (Figure 1).
- Implementation of Ghana's resilience-related policies requires multi-sector cooperation and multi-level participation from several parties, including financial bodies, universities and other research institutions, a range of government ministries, civil society organizations, the private sector, service providers, trade, industry and farmer organizations, traditional authorities and international development partners.

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CGIAR RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Water, Land and Ecosystems

In 2011, Ghana delivered its second *national communication report* to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) describing the actions it was taking to reduce the impact of climate change. The report identified resilience as a key goal. The third national communication report in 2015 reiterated its commitment to a climate-resilient economy.

Ghana launched a *National Climate Change Policy* in 2013 that established climate resilience as a development goal. Major objectives, including adaptation, social development and mitigation, are to be achieved by improving awareness of climate change issues, mainstreaming climate solutions, and reducing vulnerability in natural and social systems. Multiple stakeholders, including civil society groups, and private and public sector agencies, were involved in designing the policy, which emphasizes the importance of disaster preparedness through early warning and response systems. Four of the ten focus areas identified in the policy directly target resilience: agriculture and food security, infrastructure development, vulnerable communities, and terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems. The policy called for an oversight committee drawn from seven different ministries.

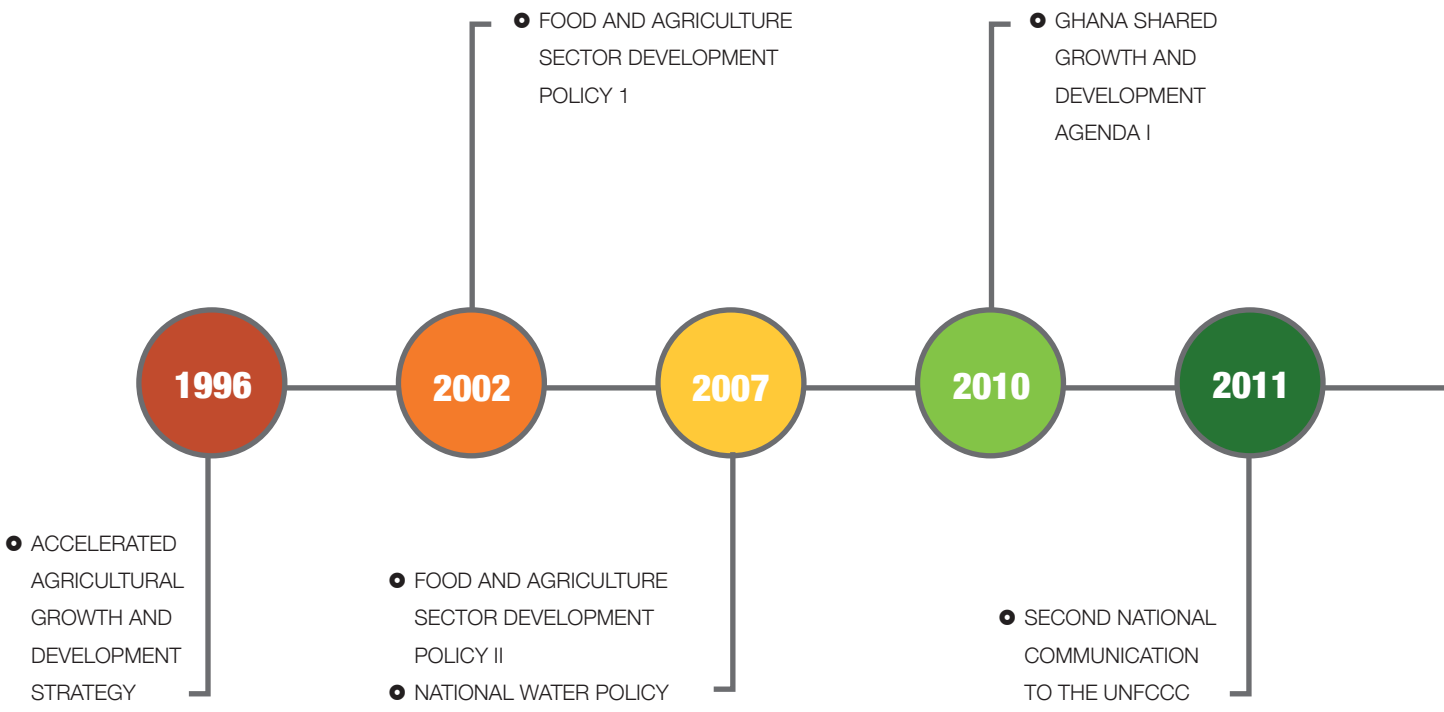
Sectoral policies on resilience

Food and agriculture

The *Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy II* (FASDEP II) (2007) aims to modernize agriculture through sustainable resource use and the promotion of market growth. The policy grew out of a review of past interventions in the agriculture sector and extensive consultations with stakeholders on the challenges of agricultural production. A major objective is to improve the sustainable management of land resources for environmental resilience and agricultural productivity.

The *National Seed Policy* (2013) describes strategies and actions for developing and managing the seed sub-sector. The informal seed sector makes up about 80% of seed resources in Ghana. It includes farmer-saved seeds, and on-farm seed multiplication and exchanges, mostly of traditional and commercially non-viable crops.

Figure. 1. Timeline of key policies and strategies towards climate resilience in Ghana



Note: SDGs - United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; DFID - Department for International Development, UK

The challenges include insufficient production and distribution, inadequate support and the absence of a structural framework for improved seed development. The policy notes that the interdependence of population growth, climate change and shrinking agricultural land calls for the use of climate-resilient approaches to ensure food security.

One village, one dam

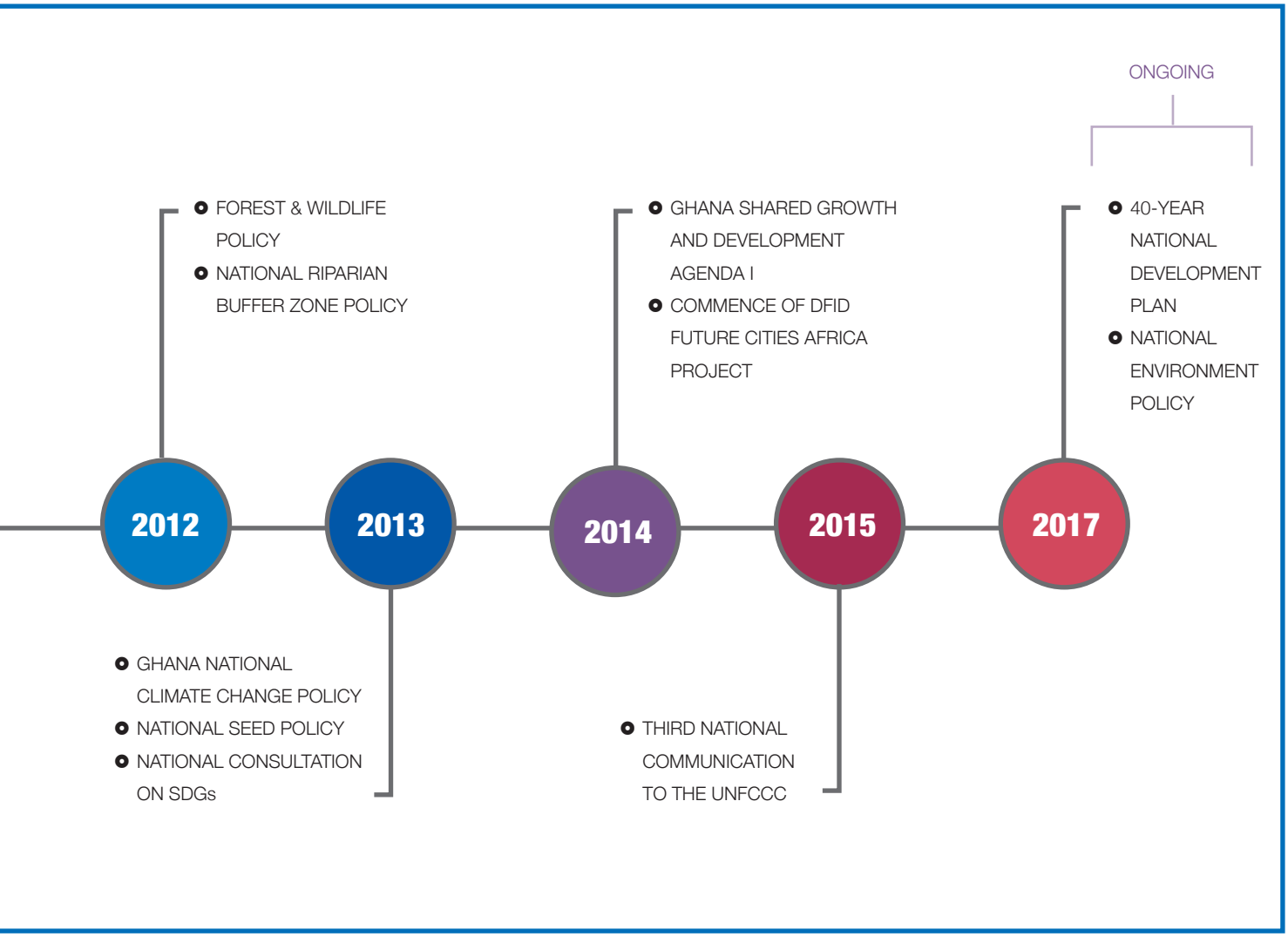
Working with development partners in the USA and Brazil, Ghana aims to construct affordable and efficient dams, particularly in the northern regions, in an effort to support the national agricultural policy. The dams would be owned and managed by the communities they serve. Going a step beyond its name, the 'One village, one dam' project will also introduce an irrigation program that can serve clusters of farms and provide smallholders with a reliable source of water, even during the dry season.

Watershed management

The *National Water Policy* (2007) was Ghana's first long-term consolidated water policy; previously, the country had been served by short-term sub-sectoral strategies. The policy recognizes the links between water resources and the agriculture, energy, sanitation, tourism, industrial and environmental sectors. Its objective is to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in managing and developing the nation's water resources. The policy includes sections on integrated water resources management (including water for energy, food security and transportation), and urban and community water delivery. It also describes the international legal framework for the domestic and transboundary use of water resources. Although the policy does not mention resilience as such, it makes clear that well-managed water resources are necessary to minimize the effects of climate change.

Forest and natural resource management

The *Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy* (GFWP) (2012) refers to the conservation and sustainable development of forest and wildlife resources as a means to maintain



environmental stability, and ensure the continuous flow of benefits from the goods and services offered by forests. The policy, which replaces an earlier 1994 version, was prompted by continuing deforestation and forest degradation, and emerging global mechanisms such as the European Union's Voluntary Partnership Agreement on timber trade and the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+); these mechanisms have major implications for the forest and wildlife industries as well as for local livelihoods. Although the GFWP does not mention resilience per se, Strategic Direction 1.8 calls for policies and strategies to promote the role of forests in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Examples of resilience intervention programs

Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING)

Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) is a 5-year program (2014-2019) led and funded by USAID. The program focuses on improving the nutrition and livelihood status of vulnerable households. The cross-sector program is concerned with agriculture, livelihoods, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and governance. By the end of 2016, the project had reached over 36,000 vulnerable households with interventions in agriculture, access to savings and credit facilities, and household nutrition.

Climate-smart villages

CGIAR and partners established a climate-smart village in Lawra, a district in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The project aims to ensure climate-resilient crop and agricultural production through participatory action research. Local farmers collaborate with researchers and other local partners to test and adopt climate-smart technologies and practices.

This brief summarizes the findings from a consultancy report, *A review of resilience and agricultural livelihood systems policies in Ghana*, prepared by Dr. Ohene Sarfoh, Independent Consultant.

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Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) CGIAR-natural resource management (NRM) Public International Organization (PIO) grant no. EEM-G—00-04-00010 to the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), with additional support from the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE).

IWMI International Water Management Institute

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is a non-profit, scientific research organization focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. IWMI works in partnership with governments, civil society and the private sector to develop scalable agricultural water management solutions that have a real impact on poverty reduction, food security and ecosystem health. Headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with regional offices across Asia and Africa, IWMI is a CGIAR Research Center and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE).

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